The Business Aspect of Christian Stewardship

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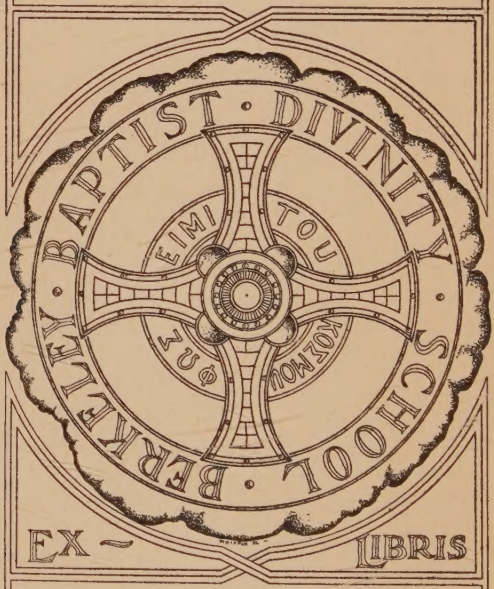

Accession No. _____

Date _____

THE BUSINESS ASPECT OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

By

L. B. HARTMAN, A. M., D. D.

Author of
"DIVINE PENOLOGY"
"REPUBLIC OF AMERICA"
ETC.

"Business Principles, like Mathematics, are an indispensable Factor of every Successful Life"—Thompson

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof"

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PHILADELPHIA
American Baptist Publication Society
1907

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Published January, 1907

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TO THE CAUSE DEAREST THE
HEART OF OUR
BLESSED REDEEMER

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THE BUSINESS ASPECT OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

I

AS TO VALUES AND DEBITS

Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing.

—*2 Sam. 24 : 24.*

BUSINESS principles usually include receipts and expenditures, costs and values, debits and credits, obligations and payments, bank accounts and balancing sheets, etc. ; and if we consider Christian stewardship on the basis of these principles alone, even apart from any spiritual obligations attending it, we may, perhaps, serve

the business man in an interesting and profitable way.

The commercial, social, and moral value of the church of God to the world of mankind is great beyond all estimation, and its claims upon the human race are correspondingly incalculable.

The true relation of Christianity to the world, unfortunately, is not generally appreciated. That the church should be looked upon as a mere luxury, or extensive charity, is a sad and mischievous error. No doubt it may be safely said nine-tenths of the world's people, and one-third of the church people, labor under this erroneous impression, or something akin to it. They regard the church as an organized appeal to benevolence, and they contribute to its support as they give to any other charity more or less pressing.

Men look very differently upon

other expenses of life, such as their daily necessities, taxes, etc. They wisely argue that the government is a necessity of well-being, and must be maintained ; that each individual is a factor of the government and therefore responsible in part for its support, and he realizes that such support is for his own good and protection, and thus he pays his taxes on the principle of self-preservation, pays them neither as a benevolence nor as a charity, but as a *duty* which he owes to himself and the government which is his guardian and civil sanctuary.

The same is true in regard to other things ; he pays his rentals, the interest on his mortgage, the insurance on his property, and his bills at the store, etc., not as charity, but as an obligation of justice, honor, and well-being. For such a man to view his contributions to the church as a mere charity is doubtless a sad mistake.

Is not Christianity also a necessity of well-being? Is not the church our benefactress to whom we are indebted, directly and indirectly, for all we have and are, and as such has she not claims upon us equally founded on justice and honor, beyond that of mere charity?

At least four reasons may be assigned for this view:

1. The social value of the church of God on earth is a measure of our indebtedness to her.

Valuable as our civilization is to us we owe it to Christianity. History seems to verify the claim that no people in any age of the world have ever attained unto the highest civilization apart from Christianity.

What was it that aroused Japan from the slumber and inertia of centuries and placed her among the more civilized nations? Evidently Western civilization permeated and freighted

with the principles of Christianity and spiritual life.

What makes the Anglo-Saxon of to-day differ from the ancient Briton? The same that makes the Christian nations differ from the heathen—the church of God. Christianity poured its light into the minds of Alfred and Charlemagne, and the civilization of Europe was born. Even Hume, infidel that he was, ascribed the civil liberty of England to the Puritans, and the great McIntosh wrote that "the doctrine by which Luther shook the world lies at the foundation of all civil and religious liberty."

The history of missionary operations abounds with forceful illustrations of the same truth.

Sidney Smith used to laugh at the idea of Christianizing savages before educating and civilizing them, but actual experiments soon exploded his theories and proved that savages

would rather have plumes and painted feathers than letters and books, and preferred bows and arrows to mathematics and astronomy. Nothing touched and moved their hearts until they were told the simple story of redeeming Love.

Thus the early missionaries of Greenland labored twenty years to civilize its people, but failed in every attempt, until they preached Christ crucified to them, by which they were soon Christianized; and their civilization followed after.

This seems to be the law of human progress. The church of God is the inspiration and forerunner, and civilization follows in its wake, and the civilization which follows is always high or low, as the principles of its forerunner are pure and true, on the one hand, or mixed with error and superstition on the other.

But says one, "Did not the ancient

Phœnicians, Egyptians, and Greeks, attain to a high degree of civilization apart from Christianity — or God's church ? "

Modestly I answer, verily not ; since as I believe their sages, poets, and philosophers all drank deeply from the fountains of Hebrew literature, and lighted their torches of inspiration at the burning altars of God's sanctuary. Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Seneca, Homer, Pythagoras, sat at the feet of Jewish sages and, in the language of Clemens Alexandrinus, "stole their chief opinions out of the books of Moses and the prophets." This I believe is true to history. The testimony of Witsius, Gale, Stillingfleet, Eusebius, and others, not only establishes this fact as truth, but places it beyond successful disputation.

Thus even Greece is no exception to this law of progress ; and its civilization never advanced farther, nor

rose higher, than the principles it had gleaned from Moses and the Hebrew prophets; and it waned, finally, in direct proportion as it yielded those principles and lost them in its pride and sensuality. As Mitford says, "Athens was never so licentious and corrupt as when it was most learned and refined."

Thus having lost the light of Moses and the prophets, by which their civilization had arisen and flourished, it could not now stand alone, and despite their education, their arts, and their philosophies, the Greeks went down in degradation and ruin.

It would seem that the history of a people's religion is the history of its manners, prosperity, and literature. The philosophy of history is nothing more, and can be nothing less, than the science of the various religious systems which have from time to time quickened, on the one hand, or de-

graded on the other, the inhabitants of the world.

Where the church of God declines, all that is ennobling to society and true manhood declines with it. Thus when Paris discarded religion and closed its church doors, the "reign of terror" fell upon it like the Nemesis of heaven; and but for Napoleon, who restored the worship of the true God, Paris might to-day be nothing but a scene of desolation and the home of wild beasts. Nothing but the church saved Paris. Human nature has never changed, and that we are not as wild as the Indian, as superstitious as the hordes of Africa, or as savage as the South Sea Islanders, is due to the church of God in our midst. To her we owe our civilization with all its teeming blessings of life, liberty, and happiness.

Truly our indebtedness to the church of God by this measurement

is incalculable and overwhelming. Even on the simplest business principles, who is able to balance his accounts?

2. The commercial value of the church of God is another measure of our indebtedness to it. It must be admitted that civilization is valuable only in proportion to its permanence, and the value it gives to life and property rises and falls, *pari passu*, with its own intrinsic strength, more clearly stated thus:

(1) Security of life and property is necessary to give wealth its highest value.

(2) But moral restraints are necessary to assure such security.

(3) Therefore whatever produces this moral restraint is the true source of value.

We have seen, as evidenced by Greece, that civilization of itself cannot effect this necessary restraint, as

it always carries in its own bosom the elements of its own dissolution. In Greece it perished by its own liberalism and lawlessness. Paul tells us that evil men "wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3 : 13).

The natural tendency of society is toward degradation ; no force within itself can reverse this tendency. The only power that can possibly check it and lift society to a higher plane is from above, and comes from beyond itself, as history abundantly demonstrates.

Now whence come these restraining forces which check the evil, sustain the good, and give permanence to civilization? Confessedly, from Christianity. Therefore,

(4) The church of God is the true and ultimate source of commercial values.

It follows, thus, that property is

more valuable in Christian lands, where "pure and undefiled religion" prevails. It is admitted that the Mohammedan religion has destroyed the agriculture of Persia. The intrinsic value of the soil in Turkey is greater than that of America, yet the poorest acre in the United States is worth five of the richest in Turkey. And why so? Because here we are protected in our rights by a vigorous conscience in the body politic, enforced by the living principles of Christianity, while in Turkey they are constantly exposed to lawless rapacity, confiscation, and death.

A sense of insecurity never fails to depreciate property. During the "reign of terror" in Paris property went down over eighty per cent. in value. Houses were more valuable in Jerusalem in the reign of David than during the rebellion of Absalom. The vineyard of Naboth was worth

seventy per cent. more in the days of Solomon than in the reign of wicked Ahab. Lot's palatial mansion in the city of Sodom was not worth half as much as the tent of Abraham's servant in the mountains—all because values depend on the presence of the church of God, the kingdom of heaven.

What would one give for a house and lot in a town where there is neither Sabbath nor sanctuary, neither Bible nor pulpit, with the assurance that there never would be?

Why is it that skeptics and the Ingersoll class of agnostics do not invest their money in such places? Because they know and fully realize that values depend on the presence of Christian institutions in spite of their antagonism. They are too wise to practise what they preach and too sensible to believe what they profess.

An African prince sent an embassy to Queen Victoria asking her what is

the secret of England's greatness. She handed him a Bible, saying: "Tell your prince this is the secret of England's greatness." The same is true of our own country—of American civilization. To those who discard all church obligations, and even deny their indebtedness to her, I submit the following charge:

Taking our city (Trenton) as a center, and drawing a circle including three thousand square miles, we have a district under the banner of the very church they ignore, wherein a man may live in decency, comfort, and honor; a district wherein age is revered, infancy protected, manhood respected, womanhood honored, and life and property held in due regard. Now, until these men can find a district of equal extent on this planet where the church of God has not, directly or indirectly, gone before and cleared the way and laid the

foundations, and made decency and security possible, let them hide their heads in silence and confess the absurdity of their position. "O gratitude, thou art a jewel!"

Moreover, the church is the handmaid of true progress and invention. It is a striking fact that the greatest triumphs of science have been achieved under the sacred chandeliers of the church of God. Copernicus was a Christian monk. Kepler was devoutly pious. Sir Isaac Newton, of whom Professor Dolbear said "that he made greater additions to human knowledge than all the rest of mankind had made in a thousand years," was a profound worshiper of his heavenly Father. Lord Bacon was a lover and enthusiastic student of the Bible.

The story is told of Professor Morse that before he was able to perfect his invention in telegraphy,

he reached a critical point at which he felt it necessary to call upon God in prayer to help him solve the difficulty.

It is true that many inventors are not Christians and some even openly deny the Bible, but it is also true that these same inventors have lived and wrought in Bible lands under the light and the inspiration of a living Christianity, without which they could never have reached their altitude of mental activity, freedom, and thought.

How may we account for the fact that nearly all the discoveries and inventions, poetry and music worthy of the name, are born in lands of Christian churches and under the luminous beams of Christian principles and institutions? Verily, Christianity is the mother of them all and has made all the world her debtor for reasons innumerable and incalculable on the simplest business principles.

3. The economic value of the church of God is another measure of our indebtedness to her. The evils of society absorb more of the people's money than do our churches. Vice costs more than virtue, sickness more than health. It costs more to support a drunkard than a sober man, more to sustain a licentious than a chaste man. It costs more to convict a criminal than to lead him in the right path. It costs more to break the Sabbath than to keep it, more to support our courts and lawyers than our pulpits and pastors. There is more money expended for beer and rum annually in our land than for all our churches and schools and, but for the restraining influence of the church, the amount would be doubled.

The church costs vastly less than the crimes it prevents. Even apart from its spiritual forces it is the most efficient police force in the land. It

prevents more crime than all our criminal courts and magistrates, more than all our laws and lawyers, and that too at less than half the expense.

The church is the exponent of the best and highest economy, and what a man gives to support and promote her welfare virtually redounds to the lessening of other expenses. As a mere matter of pure business policy, therefore, a man's duty to himself resolves itself into the choice between giving his money to the church and through it prevent crime or paying three times as much in taxes to sustain the courts in punishing crime after it is committed. These conditions confront every man, and we cannot but realize that the prevention of crime through the church is not only more effectual but costs vastly less than the courts.

Taxes to sustain civil tribunals for the punishment of evil-doers, or church

contributions for the prevention of crime—which shall we choose? One or the other it must be, *and will be.* Which is the wiser and more business-like economy?

There are many good citizens of our country who are not members of the church. Some even oppose and antagonize it, but all are alike indebted to it for a large share of the blessings they enjoy. The church annually saves them many a dollar in preventing evils which would otherwise increase their taxes, and also in promoting that condition of society—of morals and good order—which gives them success in their business and secures them their fortunes.

Thus it follows that every man in our land, be he a saint or a sinner, is largely indebted to the church for his prosperity and possessions and, on the plainest business principles, it has the right to lay its claims for

reciprocal aid at his feet and call for its just dues.

Again, another element of economic value of Christianity inheres in the fact that it is the preventive of a false and more expensive religion. Man is naturally a religious being, and history shows that he will have a religion either true or false. Guthrie says: "Never yet did a traveler find a people on the face of the earth who did not pray to some being or other, true or false." Priests, altars, and sacrifices hold a place among all tribes and peoples of the earth as the unmistakable signs of their religious character.

Theodore Parker said: "Yet, if he would, man cannot live all to this world. If not religious, he will be superstitious. If he worship not the true God he will have his idols." We may rest assured that if we had not the Christian religion, we would

be the ignorant votaries of some other religion ten times more expensive and burdensome. Look at paganism, with its thousands of altars and array of priests at every altar, and its thousands of living victims given in sacrifice. When the great temple in the city of Mexico was dedicated to the sun, in 1482, sixty thousand human beings were sacrificed upon its altars during the ceremonies of the occasion.

The infants cast into the Ganges as sacrifices to rapacious deities, and the thousands who voluntarily perished under the wheels of the Juggernaut, and the countless hecatombs that smoked upon the altars of superstition and fanaticism, and the long pilgrimages of whole armies of devotees to the shrine of their idolatry—all serve to show how expensive and costly are the false religions of the world. But for Christianity their religion would be ours even to-day.

Evidently our indebtedness to the church of God cannot be measured by any possible sacrifice we can make for her welfare.

Whatever it may demand in its needs, it saves us infinitely more than it costs us. That our children are not offered in sacrifice to sanguinary deities we owe to the church; that our homes are our own, with all their peace, comfort, and treasures, is due to the church. If our property has any commercial value, the church has given it that value; and if there is a dollar in our pockets, the church has virtually placed it there. Truly we owe the church everything—even our all.

The question comes back, "Do we appreciate it?" Do we realize that the church is "the salt of the earth"—that it is "the light of the world," the quickening energy and inspiration of life, the conservator of

law and good order, and the source and sustainer of our highest civilization? All men share its blessings, whether friends or foes, and all are in honor bound to aid in its maintenance in order to balance their own obligations on the purest business principles. No man can be just to himself and ignore these obligations.

4. The moral value of the church of God is another measure of our indebtedness to it.

Christianity furnishes the only true standard of morals. It is the only power on earth that can correct the conscience of man, the only power that can subdue the passions of the human heart and regenerate the race of mankind. It is the only voice that proclaims the "gospel to the poor, that heals the brokenhearted, that preaches deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, and sets at liberty them that are

bruised, and preaches the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4 : 18).

The church is a magazine of spiritual forces and the purveyor of the soul's richest feasts. Within its sacred folds repose the verities of eternity. Beneath its hallowed shrines bubble up the springs of true life and happiness. Around its holy altars cluster the hopes of penitent hearts, and through its divine oracles she speaks of "pardon bought with blood," the solace of contrite souls.

Of its comforts and joys many of us know. Of its refreshing waters we have tasted ; at its table we have feasted until out of the fulness of our hearts we could sing with Moore :

Here bring your wounded hearts,
Here tell your anguish ;
Earth has no sorrows that He cannot heal.

The church wins her trophies from every field and gathers her jewels for

heaven. She throws light over every field of human experience; she cheers the despondent; she elevates the degraded, lifts the fallen, and leads the penitent to the shrine of redeeming love; she comforts the sick and the bereaved, and points the dying to the "mansions prepared"; she spans the silent grave with the bow of undying hope and lights her torch in the glow of immortality and eternal life.

To talk of values, language fails and comparisons vanish like stars before the rising sun. As the "body of Christ," as the "bride of the Lamb," as the "tabernacle of God among men," the church to-day commands the admiration of all intelligent beings in heaven and earth, and merits the prayers, and loves, and lives, of all nations and tongues.

Again the question returns: "Do we appreciate her value to us and ours?" Can we sing with the psalm-

ist: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning"? Dear reader, if the church is your soul's home, the axis of your spiritual affections, the conservator of your hopes and joys—if she is to win for you "the sweetest glories earth can yield and brighter bliss of heaven," then never this side of heaven can you fully realize the extent of your indebtedness and obligations to her.

I love thy church, O God!

. . . . . .

For her my tears shall fall;
To her my prayers and toils be given,
Till cares and toils shall end.

II

AS TO COSTS AND SACRIFICES

Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing.

—*David.*

THERE can be neither life, nor love, nor religion, without essential costs and sacrifices. True religion is supreme love, which can never express itself but with a feeling of wilful self-denial. A love that will not disturb other loves is not supreme, and therefore cannot command the heart and the life. The student loves his books, but he loves ease and sports also, yet he willingly sacrifices these for the former because it is supreme. The poet loves nature's solitudes, but

he also loves society, yet he withdraws from the latter to drink in the inspiration of the former, because of his greater love. The husband loves his wife, and he joyfully sacrifices other loves to promote her comfort and happiness, because his love for her is above others. True love is a flame which burns, and in burning, it consumes all other objects which stand in its way or would divert it from its loyal purposes.

Thus any embodiment of supposed love—beautiful as it may appear externally—in which you discover the absence of the spirit of self-sacrifice, will at once sink in our estimation to mere pretense and empty sentiment. What would we think of a man's professed love for his wife and family if it never led him to sacrifice one pleasure, or desire, or plan, or a single dollar to make them comfortable and happy? You say, "selfish

tyrant," and you say well, for of such a man it must be true that all that is not knave is fool.

No man can convince himself or satisfy his own heart that he really and truly loves an object, when he is not willing to sacrifice something for it. This is especially true, and supremely true in religion.

Ornan on a certain occasion freely tendered to David all things he needed for a burnt offering. The gift was free and fully ample, but David refused it solely on the ground that such an offering would cost him nothing. His religious love could not be satisfied with a costless service.

It demanded a sacrifice which would express itself in actual "costs." The supreme affection and devotion of his heart called for an act of self-denial, and prompted him to express his loyalty in a sentiment at once so noble that it stands without a parallel

in the literature of Christendom. "I will not take that which is thine for the Lord, nor offer burnt offerings without cost" (1 Chron. 21 : 24).

The only religion which "hath promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come" is the religion of self-sacrificing love, which nobly seeks to express itself in essential "costs." It is the religion of spirituality in contradistinction to formalism, of debit in contradistinction to credit, of self-denial in contradistinction to self-indulgence. The "widow's mite" cost her "all her living," and it was the cost of it to her that Jesus admired and commended. If a man gives only what he can spare without feeling it, it really costs him nothing, and it must be self-evident to every Christian that any love which can satisfy itself with such a costless offering cannot be true love nor true religion.

The same is true of all the graces in practical religion. "If you love them only who love you, what reward have you?" Or what credit is there in it? If you forbear only where there is no special grievance, your forbearance costs you nothing; if you do only what you are compelled to do and refuse to do that which is unpleasant, your obedience costs you nothing; if you bridle your tongue only when there is no gossip afloat, or when no jealous feeling seeks revenge, your grace of speech costs you nothing; if you only pray and work and witness for Christ when you feel like it, or when circumstances compel you, your religion costs you nothing. Is not a religion that can satisfy itself in costless offerings, costless deeds, costless graces, and costless loves, seriously deficient, and will it not fail in the day when every man "shall give an account of his stewardship"

and be judged "according to his works"?

Again, true religion is earnestness in contradistinction to policy or expediency. Sincerity is its very essence. Had David accepted the offering of Ornan he would have saved five thousand dollars. Expediency might have said, "this is a rare opportunity of economy. Ornan can well afford it, and I would be the gainer by just so much." But David's religion was too intensely earnest and sincere to yield to such a policy—his love could be satisfied with nothing less than actual, personal costs. It is always thus with true love. The ointment which Mary poured upon the head of her Lord, was "waste" in the eyes of policy and expediency, but it was to her loving soul a treasure of priceless value after she had thus used it.

The religion which moves on the

low plane of mere policy, is simply utilitarianism, a thing of the head but never of the heart, an "ism" which can never produce true experimental godliness of life and character. What would you think of your son were he to say: "Father, I love you because I feel it is expedient"; or of your wife: "Husband, I love you because I think it is the best policy." True enough, it may be the best policy, but if it is only policy it is not love at all, because it has no heart in it. Such religion moves on a level so low that it forfeits all claims to experimental spirituality and genuine love. Its pitiful cry too often is: "There are too many preachers, too many churches, too many collections; to what purpose this waste." Among this class of religionists you find those who live and seem to feel that God is running this universe solely in their interests. If he sends them fruit

they eat it, if wine they drink it, if money they hoard it; and only what they cannot themselves absorb they give to the church. I have known such to hold the hymn-book with one hand and lustily sing while the collection was being taken—"Had I ten thousand worlds, I'd give them all to thee"—while with the other hand they were rummaging their pockets and scraping the edge of a cent to make sure it was not a dime. For such penurious souls my heart bleeds in sympathy, when I think of the pitiful fate of Achan, and of Gehazi, and of Ananias and Sapphira and others.

How forcible the words—"The love of money is the root of all evil." The German translation here is perhaps more explicit: "Stinginess is the root of all evil." Stinginess is the mother of covetousness, of which a noted author says: "Of all the varieties of

sin none is meaner than covetousness, and none takes hold of the human heart with a deadlier grip; it is the incarnation of selfishness." It is clearly the bane of honor and nobility, and the death of true, vital godliness. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (See Mark 8 : 36.)

Again, true religion is nobility of soul, in contradistinction to cupidity and selfishness. The church of God is a unity made up of many individuals. Paul calls it a "body of many members," wherein "if one member suffers all the members suffer with it," that is, the church is a spiritual organism pervaded with a common life, in which all individual units share a common responsibility in the demands of its own existence and growth. Her pulpit, her services, her schools, her missionary enterprises at home

and abroad, her State work, all must be sustained ; and all lay equal claims upon every member for a proportionate share of the "costs" and necessary expenses attending them, and to which no member of the body who is true to himself will fail to respond. To live in such an organism, and willingly and of choice avail one's self of its privileges and blessings at the cost and expense of others, betrays a spirit of selfishness unworthy of Christian character and devoid of true nobility of life.

No man can be true to his church and refuse to share the common burdens of her needs and cares. Paul meant no less when he said, "Every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6 : 5). It was strictly enjoined that "No man should appear before the Lord empty, and every man should give as he is able" (see Deut. 16 : 18).

The watchword of true religion is,

"Ever onward and forward at any cost or sacrifice." It never asks, "How little can I do, or how much may I leave undone and yet not forfeit my chances of heaven?" but rather cries, "How much can I do to gain, not only an inheritance, but an *abundant* entrance into the kingdom?" It never tries to escape the costs of cross-bearing, of toil and labor, of self-denial and of giving largely, giving freely—giving until one feels it, for Jesus' sake.

Dear reader, do you share this religion; if so, what does it cost you? Surely there is everything in Christ to foster and encourage a religion which seeks expression in "costs" and sacrifices. It is abundantly justified in his love for us, in his precious and far-reaching promises, and in the inspiring beauty of his character and triumphs. "He was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we

through his poverty may become rich."

I gave my life for thee—
What hast thou given for me?

It was this religion which inspired the psalmist to sing, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; bring an offering and come into his courts; O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear before him all the earth (Ps. 96: 89); see also Prov. 3: 9, 10; Luke 6: 38; 2 Cor. 9: 8).

III

AS TO PRIVILEGES AND OBLIGATIONS

Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which costs me nothing.

—*David.*

CONFESSING our indebtedness to Christianity, and realizing that its growth, propagation, and development in the world are ever attended with essential "costs" at our hands, let us now inquire as to the extent and the limit of such costs.

That God could have carried on the great work of his church on earth without our agency, just as he does the solar system, no one can doubt; but that he saw fit to do otherwise is equally evident. In every moral

movement among men he has in all ages wrought through the instrumentality of his people, always utilizing their talents, possessions, their influence and power, their affections and experiences; in short, all that they have and are; and when he put in motion the broad system of his mercy, he stamped upon it the laws of "action and reaction," and made the work of heavenly beneficence doubly blessed, blessing him that gives and him that receives.

Because he works on this plan we cannot possibly escape the obligation of sharing in the essential "costs" and necessary burdens. Christ could have meant no less when he said, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's." What we owe to Cæsar, and what we owe to God are debts of equal obligation; the first is known as tax or

"tribute," and the latter is practical religion.

The privilege of aiding God's cause on earth, is perhaps the most important and vital in the vast domain of Christian responsibilities. It is an act of piety as really as the singing of psalms or the preaching of the gospel, and is as essential to religious life and growth as prayer itself. It is a heaven-ordained principle, and so interwoven with the eternal purposes of God, and so directly bearing on the salvation of the world, that none of us can possibly escape its sacred and ever-increasing obligations.

How much then ought I to give to this cause? Since God's cause is as old as the world and the laws of its growth and progress are the same as from the beginning, what are its claims upon me? Dispensations have changed, types have been fulfilled, and prophecies have ceased, but God's

cause has ever remained the same, and its claims come upon us with an ever-increasing urgency. From the beginning the costs of worship were incumbent upon the worshiper. If we go back to Moses, and from Moses to Abraham, and from Abraham to Adam, we find sacrifices and offerings, all of which cost something. God has never accepted a worship which cost the worshiper nothing, and instances are not wanting where he has rejected the service because it was not attended with true self-denial and necessary gifts and offerings.

The doctrine of "tithes"—giving one-tenth of all our income to sustain his cause—was evidently God's original plan; his law for giving from the beginning, which has never been abrogated. In the beginning God set apart two things for himself alone, viz., one-seventh of our time and one-tenth of our income. The former he

called the "Day of Rest" and the latter the "Tithe." It is important here to note that the "tithe" is that portion of a man's income which belongs to the Lord and *not to himself* (Lev. 27 : 30). "The tithe is the Lord's . . . it is holy unto the Lord"; that is, no man has a right to it and never had in any age of the world, nor has any man a right to it to-day. It belongs to the Lord and to him alone. It is his own.

So strikingly true is this that the prophet Malachi (3 : 8) says that when a man withholds the tithe or applies it to his own uses, he actually "robs God," because he employs as his own what belongs to God alone, as "holy unto the Lord."

But there are those who tell us that "the tithe system was part of the ceremonial law of Moses and that it expired with the Mosaic dispensation." This is a popular view, but it

is a mixture of truth and error. It is true that the tithe was merged into the ceremonial law of Moses for a time, but it never had its origin there and it was not at all dependent upon it, therefore the abrogation of that law did not and could not carry with it the abrogation of the tithe system. Centuries before Moses lived the tithe system was in full operation. It was evidently coeval with the origin of sacrifices and held a place in the earliest forms of worship.

Abraham, five hundred years before Moses, gave tithes to Melchizedek (Heb. 7 : 2), and Jacob, four hundred years before Moses, vowed to give a tithe to the Lord (Gen. 28 : 22). Where did Jacob get the idea of a "tithe" if not from the prevailing customs of his day?

Doctor Smith says: "Long before the appointment of the Levitical tithe under the law, there are numerous

instances of its practice found in both profane and biblical history among the heathen nations. The Greeks, Romans, Carthaginians, and Arabians offered tithes of all their revenues to their deities." He also refers to twenty-seven different passages, gleaned from sixteen different authors, corroborating the same. (See Bib. Dict., "Tithes.")

From whence, think you, did these heathen nations receive the tithe system in vogue among them? To my mind the only rational hypothesis seems to be that it was handed down through the old patriarchs to Noah and through him to his descendants, and thus became the general custom in all worship, whether of the true God or of false deities, and as such Abraham and Jacob were long familiar with it.

It is evident, therefore, that Moses had nothing whatever to do with the

origin of the tithe, any more than he had with the origin of the "seventh day of rest." The tithe system held its sway for thousands of years, and so essential was it to acceptable worship in those early ages that, when God finally instituted the Mosaic economy at Sinai, he incorporated the tithe and gave it a place in the ceremonial law of Moses. He did the same also with the "seventh day of rest," and called it the "Sabbath"!

The question now arises, Did these ancient institutions lose anything for having been merged into the Mosaic church for a time? Did they therefore die when the Mosaic dispensation passed away? Who would assume such a daring presumption? Is the Lord's Day less binding because it once passed through the old dispensation? And is the tithe less binding for the same reason?

We think not. The system ex-

presses the mind of God concerning a great and vital principle of religion, and nothing in the state or nature of man or in the church or in God's plans and purposes has occurred since to abrogate, reduce, or modify the principle. Unshorn of its original authority, unchanged in its original aim of beneficence, and uneclipsed as to its original beauty, it still holds its original rank among the highest privileges in the field of Christian responsibilities and obligations.

Let us for a moment trace its operations after it was merged into the church at Sinai. Here, as before, it was exacted for the support of worship. But as worship under Moses was greatly enlarged, other expenses were necessarily incurred. The tithe was soon enlarged and freighted with additional tithes for the poor and for various feasts and offerings, etc. (see Deut. 14 : 22–29). There were also

shekels for the sanctuary, and for charities and hospitalities, and special expenses for yearly pilgrimages to Jerusalem, etc., so that, according to the best calculations (see Comp. Commentary), it cost the pious Israelite no less than one-third of his income to support his religion. On this basis the tithe system ran through the entire course of the Mosaic dispensation, and it was always considered so sacred by the Jews that, amidst all the defects Christ found in Israel when he came, the tithe was still observed with scrupulous zeal. Although it required one-third of his income, year after year, it was always the first he paid whether the crops were long or short; it was the last thing to suffer when times were hard among them. When men would curtail their expenses in the present day they usually begin at the sanctuary. Doubtless some Gentiles might learn

a lesson of religious devotion and loyalty from the Jews.

The emergence of the tithe system out of the old dispensation is equally interesting. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (9 : 1) tells us: "Verily, the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary" "which stood only in meats and drinks and divers washings and carnal ordinances, etc., imposed until the time of reformation" (Eph. 2 : 15 ; Col. 2 : 14). All these Christ abolished when he fulfilled the ceremonial law, "nailing them to his cross!"

Thus the ceremonial law with its types, symbols, offerings, and their extra costs, all passed away in Christ, and from the midst of the transformation the tithe system again emerges, now divested of all its Jewish accretions to resume its original place in the sphere of worship.

The non-essential and extra costs which the ceremonial law had imposed upon it dropped away, so that in our day it calls only for one-tenth of our income as from the beginning. The system stands again where it stood in the days of Melchizedek, having lost nothing for having passed through the Mosaic dispensation.

The system was in vogue in Christ's day. How did he treat it? Did he ignore it? Did he ever attempt to check it by word or deed? On the other hand, did he not encourage it when he said (Luke 11 : 42), "Woe unto you, Pharisees; for ye tithe mint and rue, and every herb, and pass over judgment and the love of God; but these ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

Did he mean less when he said (Matt. 22 : 21): "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are

God's"? Now, what are "the things which are God's" here designated as such? What would his hearers be likely to suppose they were? They seem to have understood what he meant.

Since they had always recognized the tithe as "the Lord's, as holy unto the Lord," they must have felt that "the things which belong to God" meant the tithe, nothing more, nothing less. Beyond a doubt Christ encouraged the tithe system in his day, and thus understood by his disciples it was introduced and practised by the early churches.

Paul taught (1 Cor. 16 : 2), "On the first day of the week let every one of you lay up in store as God has prospered him"; that is, in proportion to his income. But why "income"? Because that is the tithe custom which was doubtless in vogue in Corinth at the time.

Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp—the personal friend of St. John—taught "the obligation of Christians to render the tithe unto God."

Neander says: "The duty was also embodied in the Apostolic canons, a compilation of laws in force among the Christian churches about the close of the second century."

The tithe was taught and urged by Origen, Cyprian, Gregory, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine. Ambrose in the fourth century said: "He has given to you nine parts, but he has reserved the tenth to himself; and if you give not the tenth part to him, he will take away from you the nine parts."

Augustine in the fourth century said: "Our forefathers abounded in all plenty because they gave tithes to God and tribute to Cæsar; but since devotion to God has decreased the taxes of the State are raised on

us. We would not let God share our tithes, and now all is taken from us. The exchequer devours what we would not give to Christ."

How very true the words of Solomon: "Honor the Lord with thy substance, . . so shall thy barns be filled with plenty."

The tithe was enjoined by the Council of Tours in A. D. 567, by that of Macon in 585, of Rouen in 650, of Nantes in 660, and of Metz in 756. For centuries it was the prevailing custom throughout all Christendom. Bingham in his "Christian Antiquities" says: "This was the unanimous judgment of the Fathers, and the voice of the church uncontradicted for more than a thousand years, or until the usages of the church were alienated and perverted by the papal hierarchy during the dark ages."

But, as "truth crushed to earth will rise again," so the tithe again

rose unshorn of its ancient authority, and every reformation is bringing it more and more to the front, as the voice of the Master calling on every child of God to aid in the propagation of his kingdom on earth, even as in the beginning.

Can we—dare we ignore its claims? What reasons have we to expect exemption from its obligations? On what grounds could we ask it? Do we really desire such a thing? Is our religion less noble and generous than that of thousands who have honored the tithe and gained the rewards of the faithful giver? Can we satisfy our conscience on a lower level, and sacred honor on a plane less affectionate and magnanimous? Have our hearts less interest in and sympathy for poor struggling churches, and for destitute fields under the care of the Publication and the Home Mission Societies, and State Conven-

tions, etc., than others of less ability? Have we less regard for the salvation of the world, less love for fallen humanity, less pity for those who are perishing for want of the gospel, less concern for the spread of the tidings of infinite love, for the triumphs of the cross, and for the glory of our Redeemer Christ, than many who are giving their all and weep because they can do no more to honor their blessed Lord and Master and give men the benefits of his grace?

Truly the work is great. "The field is the world," a world of perishing sinners, perishing for the want of the "bread of life" and the "water of life" which we may send them through our contributions. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." But "How shall they go unless they are sent," and how shall we send them, dear reader, without our tithe—our free contribution?

"Freely ye have received, freely give."—Jesus.

"Honor the Lord with the first fruits of all thine increase."—Solomon.

"He that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully, but he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly."—Paul.

"Give and it shall be given to you."—Jesus.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth—for where your treasure is there will your heart be also."—Jesus.

"There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth, but it tendeth to poverty."—Solomon.

Please read Luke 6 : 38; 2 Cor. 9 : 6–9; Matt. 10 : 8–42; Prov. 3 : 9, 10; Prov. 11 : 24.

Verily "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

IV

AS TO THE REASONABLENESS OF GOD'S METHOD

Neither will I offer unto the Lord my God of that which costs me nothing.

—*David.*

HAVING in the preceding chapters considered our indebtedness to Christianity, and that true religion is attended with essential "costs," and that the tithe should be the minimum limit of these costs in the present age as of old, let us now consider the reasonableness of God's method thus outlined, of sustaining and promoting his church on earth. That he should claim one-tenth of our income for this purpose as wholly his own, leaving nine parts for our needs and com-

forts, is even more than our sense of honor and justice could demand. His care for us is not limited to our physical welfare alone, but includes our spiritual well-being likewise, in whose interest he demands the tithe.

Those who look upon the tithe "as a burden" should remember that it is infinitely less to them than it originally cost its author. Christ paid for all our privileges. It cost him more to provide us with the opportunity of serving God than that service costs us. He paid vastly more to secure for us the privilege of giving to his church one-tenth of our income, than that income is worth to us; and if we give it cheerfully, in the spirit of true consecration, it will secure for us greater blessings than the whole of our income possibly can (Prov. 11 25). "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth others shall himself also be watered."

The reasonableness of the tithe may be justified by several self-evident propositions:

1. That God is the creator, owner, and proprietor, of all things.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." Absolutly, nothing is our own. God lays his levies upon nature and a loyal universe responds with joy. Everything owns his sovereign right and yields implicit obedience to his call—*save man alone;* man, fallen man, the pauper of the universe, of whom it is said, "he brought nothing into this world and it is certain he can carry nothing out."

Amid the clamor of rival nations, the clash of arms and strife for empire and power, and above the world's rattle and rush for wealth and fame, one voice is heard—it is the voice of Him: "The silver and the gold are mine, and the cattle upon a thousand

hills" (see Hag. 2 : 8). "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is" (Deut. 10 : 14).

It follows, therefore, in the nature of things, that man's highest relation to the things which he possesses is only that, and only can be that, of a steward or agent doing business for another, and as a matter of simple justice he is bound to pay his allotted proportion of revenue to the lord of the land—the actual owner of all his assets.

I have called the paying of the tithe a sacrifice, but it in reality is not a sacrifice, and cannot be recognized as such. *It is a privilege;* it is practical religion. To yield up to the owner that which is his, and his only, and in no sense ours, is not a sacrifice, and should not be a "burden" in any sense. How cheerful and de-

lightful would this duty appear if we always could breathe the sentiment of David's loyal heart when he said, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee" (1 Chron. 29 : 6–17).

Every gift we make to the church of God, be it large or small, is only giving back to our Lord his own, or that which he had placed in our hands for a little while as a trust or loan. The parable of the talents illustrates this stewardship very forcibly (see Matt. 25 : 14–30).

2. The duty of the tithe is justified in reason by the fact that we are giving it to a worthy cause.

Money given to the cause of God honors both the giver and the gift. It is the cause of light against darkness, of truth against error, of heaven against hell. Every dollar given to

it bears with telic force against the powers of Satan, and aims to break the thraldom of sin and set the world free.

Look for a moment at the evils which antagonize the church. What artist can paint the picture? Here at home, see infidelity, profanity, Sabbath-breaking, and intemperance, with all their progeny of broken hearts and ruined souls.

Look at our courts and criminal dockets, our penitentiaries crowded to overflowing; add to these the long lists of secret frauds and unpunished crimes and debaucheries, and then know that every dollar given grapples with a giant more powerful than civil tribunals, or legislative jurisprudence; a fiend who hurls his infernal javelin at all things purchased by the Redeemer's blood, and worthy the prayers and tears of the church of God.

Then look abroad at Africa—at Asia and the isles of the sea, with their teeming millions writhing under the tyranny of superstition and hopeless paganism with no Saviour but their dumb idols, and no morality but that which hurries its votaries on to ruin.

And lastly, look at the serious difficulties engendered by the *misused wealth* of the church itself; wealth used in such a way as to fan the pride of life, to widen the breach between the rich and the poor; to encourage extravagance at home and licentiousness in society; to dry up the fountains of sympathy for the fallen and the outcast and the neglected, whom Jesus loved to befriend and save.

I greatly doubt whether the church of God has a foe, either at home or in heathen lands, more formidable than this misuse of God's money by some of its members.

Misuse is abuse, and abuse is crime, and crime is sin—the crying sin of the age. It is "covetousness, which is idolatry."

Alas! who can paint the picture? The poet says:

> Oh, could I picture out in full effect
> Of that soul-withering power—idolatry,
> I'd write a page which whoso dared to read,
> His eyes, instead of tears, in crimson drops
> should bleed.

It is against such scenes of darkness and sin that our tithe urges its hopeful way. True, as some contend, our dollars may not go directly and at once to the heathen in foreign fields, yet indirectly they finally all reach those shores in multiplied numbers, transmuted into living forces of efficient missionaries. Through our State Convention, our Education Society, and our home mission circles, they nourish and foster weak and

struggling churches into giants of strength; they plant new churches in destitute places, and thus increase tithes and revenues. They educate young men and women to recruit the working forces in the field at home and abroad, and thus, with an ever-increasing power and enlarged facilities and agencies, our dollars sustain and fortify the mighty bulwark of the church, and raise the standard of God against the evils of the world which antagonize the kingdom of heaven.

Our humble tithe helps to open a moral Bethesda in every land—to heal the nations. It helps to break the frightful coalition of ignorance, superstition, and crime, and to transfer the wretched captive from the power of Satan unto the true God. It helps to detach from the blood-stained car of Juggernaut its murderous motive power—to lift from before its wheels the deluded victims, and send them

to the shrine of pure worship and to the altar of the living God. It helps to intensify the flash of gospel light in demon temples, and inspire the shout in crowded pagodas, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

Yes, our money helps to burst the moral fetters of this sin-enslaved world, helps to sprinkle the shrine and altar of superstition with theanthropic and atoning blood, and to push the standard of truth, and plant the banner of the cross on every hill, until the church triumphant may shout:

The dwellers in the vale and on the rocks,
Shout to each other, and the mountain-tops
From distant mountains catch the flying sound,
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.

Rest assured, my brother, that your money through the church drives the

matchless machinery of a mighty and triumphant cause, infinitely more valuable both to yourself and the world than the one-tenth of your income, and *even more*, should your generous impulse prompt you to enlarge the gift.

And here it may be said that the tithe should not be the limit of our contributions. Since to God belong our talents, our business and possessions, and even our *ability* and *opportunity* for getting riches, it follows, as night the day, that while he demands the tithe from every one as the minimum limit, it does not limit the *maximum* of the gifts which he has the right to expect from the more prosperous and fortunate in business.

We are taught (Deut. 8 : 18), "*But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.*" Many have forgotten this, and perhaps many have never known

it : the "wealth-getting power" comes from God, and therefore it carries with it a special responsibility.

Wherever a great fortune has been accumulated it has been by and through this God-given power, and it is both reasonable and just to say that the tithe is not a sufficient return to balance God's claims upon it.

The man whose income is—say five millions a year could give one-half of it to God's cause and *not feel it*, and have a sufficiency left to live in luxury and flourish in "purple and fine linen" every day without in the least encroaching upon his capital.

Clearly the tithe cannot in such a case square a man's account with his Maker, nor meet the vast obligations of his stewardship.

Christ himself has taught, "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required" (Luke 12 : 48).

"Freely ye have received, freely give."

"Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price."

"What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul."

Read also Rom. 15 : 25–27.

3. The duty of the tithe is justified in reason by its reflexive influence on character.

No law of moral development is as effectual as that which imposes self-denial in religious activities.

It may truthfully be said :

> Judge not the life the Christian lives
> By what he saves, but what he gives.

A religion that costs no money is not worthy of the name. It cannot command the respect even of its possessor, much less of others. Man is so constituted that he cannot worship anything mean, nor engage in a mean

worship. His sense of honor must blend with his emotions of worship or both will fail together. David realized this when he said, "I will not offer unto the Lord of that which doth cost me nothing."

In the development of Christian character no one knows so well what conditions are required and what burdens are necessary as our Lord himself; and the plan he devised for this purpose is doubtless the best plan that his love and wisdom could have devised. As a stimulant to obedience and an inspiration of goodness and virtue, it has always worked well; many have grown rich in grace and ripe for heaven by cheerfully giving their tithe to his cause. By this law they have grown in experience, in fruitfulness, and in love; having no talents for preaching or singing, and but few, if any, for speaking and praying in public, they could do but

little along these lines ; but with their marvelous ability in business, they could and did make money for their Lord, and they gave and gave liberally, until they became veterans in character and pillars in the church of God. Truly what they gained in grace and experience and conscious joy was worth more to them, both for time and eternity, than all they had given.

The Bible assures us that "the liberal soul shall be made fat," and conversely the illiberal soul remains lean, of which class Dives was a specimen. The great-hearted, strong-hearted, and noble-hearted Christian is always a liberal Christian ; that is, liberal according to his ability ; he may be able to give but the "widow's mite," but the tithe is the minimum limit of his gifts.

It is a remarkable fact true to history that the spirit of liberality is, so

to speak, the tap-root of all the other graces. When a man is strong in this he is usually also strong in all other graces, but when he is weak in this they are also correspondingly weak, and when this tap-root finally dies, as it sometimes does, the other graces usually dry up and die also. There is no heart so dry, so withered and juiceless and lifeless as that of the miser or the man who never gives to benevolence. True, indeed, are the words, "The liberal soul shall be made fat." But the cheerful giver is a beautiful character because through his liberality he has been rounded out and fully developed. Like a spring of refreshing waters, he spreads the buoyancy of life all around. Like the sunbeam, he sheds light and scatters smiles into dreary hearts and desolate homes. His presence is a solace in grief. His laughter is an inspiration and his words of cheer are

like "apples of gold in pictures of silver."

The tithe as a factor of moral development dares not be ignored. It has to be reckoned with. That the use of money and character are related in some real way no one will deny, and that men are generally what the use of their money has made them is equally apparent. If they hoard it, like the miser, they shrivel up like a mummy; but if they freely give it to the cause of God they become "like trees planted by the rivers of waters," abounding in fruits of veritable gold.

Doctor Cuyler's words are too true to be lost. He said, "What a young man earns by day goes into his pocket; what he spends in the evening goes into his character." It is not money, *per se*, but the use we make of it, that molds the character "for better or for worse." "He that

is faithful in the least is faithful also in much, and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. . . If ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who shall give you that which is your own?" (See Luke 16 : 10–12 ; please also read Matt. 25 : 14–30, and 1 Tim. 6 : 17–19.)

4. The duty of the tithe is justified in reason by the principle of compensation which obtains everywhere in God's moral government.

Wherever in nature we find an outlay we also find a compensating supply. Rivers run into the sea, but the faithful clouds constantly replenish their sources. One generation passes on, but another steps forward into its place to do its work. Seed is cast into the ground, but it returns a hundredfold. Thus by the law of compensation nothing is ever really lost. It verifies the truth of Solomon's words, "There is that which

scattereth and yet increases, and there is that which withholdeth, but it tendeth to poverty." Also the words of Paul, "He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, but he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully." And again, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

From all that the Bible teaches on this subject it is doubtless safe to say that no man ever lost anything or in the end died one dollar poorer for having given freely to the church of Christ even the one-tenth of his entire income. Many texts seem to insure this. "Honor the Lord with thy substance, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty." Christ assured Peter that "No man hath left houses and lands, etc., for my sake, but shall receive many fold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Surely our Lord does not intend to mock us by such texts

as these. Does he not mean what he says?

"But," says one, "my neighbor gives nothing whatever and yet he prospers more than I do with all my giving." Such is sometimes the case, but it does not follow that he gains anything or ever did by withholding the Lord's portion. Had he given freely and abundantly to God's cause year after year who knows but that he might be worth ten dollars to his one to-day? Withholding the Lord's money has kept him back, and such withholding has kept many a man poor all his life. It is this sort of "withholding that tendeth to poverty." Evidently this man's prosperity turns on other conditions and is no evidence at all that he gained aught or saved even that which he purloined from his God.

We may lay it down as a principle of eternal truth that no man can

prosper better, or grow rich faster, by withholding from God, that which is solely and wholly his own—the tithe. This principle is again and again demonstrated in the history of the Israelites. With their loyalty to the tithe did their prosperity as a nation ever rise and fall.

But, says another, "It takes all my income to live and support my family, I cannot afford to pay a tithe."

Now suppose your income is one hundred dollars, all told. Do you suppose you could live better by withholding the Lord's part, than you could on the ninety dollars after paying his tithe? If God is faithful and true; if his promises are at all reliable, is it right or fair for any one to question his plan, take the matter into his own hands, and keep back for his own use that which God has always claimed as his own?

Do you, dear reader, really think

such a course is a real saving? How do you know? Did you ever try it? Do you think God would ruin you, or in the least interfere with your highest welfare? If there is any truth in history, if any virtue in heaven's pledges and promises, such a thing is impossible. "Give and it shall be given you."

Within recent years more than a million circulars were sent out to as many laymen, with the following statement and question: "My belief is that God blesses in temporal as well as in spiritual things the man who honors him by setting apart a stated portion of his income to his service. I have never known an exception. Have you?" To this thousands and thousands replied, and not a single substantial exception has ever been given. Is there not some weight in all this testimony? After having tried it yourself and observed

it in others, have you ever found an exception?

All these objections bear with equal weight against the Lord's day also. One says, "I cannot live if I keep one day in seven. I must work seven days in a week to support my family."

But is this true? Working seven days in a week has always proved disastrous; it has been tried again and again, but always signally failed. History shows that a man or a beast will do more work in a year, and do it better, by resting one day in seven. What Christian would offer this excuse for working on Sunday, or appropriating the Lord's day to himself?

Is it less appalling, think you, to use God's money in the same way? God's plan is evidently the best for man, and happy is he who adheres to it.

5. The duty of the tithe is justified in reason by the genius and immortal-

ity of good works. Reason says that deeds which live forever should be noble deeds. "Cast thy bread upon the water and thou shalt gather it after many days" (Eccles. 11 : 1).

Your gifts to the church of Christ set wavelets in motion that will never die. Although you die and your body moulder in the grave, yet they will move on in their mission of love. And while you regale your happy spirit in the "mansions prepared above," your gifts to the church, transmuted into the lives and activities of her living votaries on earth, will still move on and work on in glorious achievements; ever multiplying the triumphs of the church and the victories of Christ; enriching your memory here, and your joys yonder forever and ever. Alas! that we should ever forget this. Every dollar we give strikes an immortal chord and sings an eternal song

If there is anything in the promises of God, or in the blessings of Christ, why should we hesitate to place our generous gifts and offerings in an investment which secures such immortal revenues? The precarious tenure of our earthly possessions should relieve this duty of all burden and make it the delight of our hearts—the joy of our lives. We yield all in a dying day. It has well been said: "We brought nothing to the cradle and we shall carry nothing to the coffin." Money is a convenient servant, but a tyrannical, diabolical, and unrelenting master. (See Luke 12 : 15–21.)

The warning of Paul to Timothy is significant. "They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6 : 9, 10).

Oh, the deceitfulness of riches! How many it has led to deeds of folly. How many to toil and struggle, night and day, to hoard up large fortunes for their children which, after they had passed away, did more to cripple and impoverish their lives than enrich and ennoble their characters.

What did Jesus mean when he said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, for where your treasure is there will your heart be also"?

The last and greatest charge of Jesus to his church was, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

For this end he had come to earth (John 3 : 16). He came, he suffered, he died and rose from the dead that "remission of sin should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24 : 46, 47).

Glorious cause! The cause dearest to the heart of our Redeemer;

the cause for which he gave his labors, his prayers, his tears, and his life; the cause which calls louder than any other in the world, for the loyalty, devotion, and the support of all his friends! A cause it is which we shall appreciate as never before, in a coming day, when he shall say to his faithful stewards, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; naked, and ye clothed me; sick and ye visited me; in prison and ye came unto me; a stranger and ye took me in." Lord when, or how, etc.? "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (See Matt. 25 : 34–46.)

"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."

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